

EXHIBITION WHEN
"Men of Art" Series
Monday Oct. 4th 1937
7:30 to 1:00 P.M. E. S. T.

4-20-21-22-23 *Traskley*
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
FEDERAL THEATRE RADIO DIVISION
1697 BROADWAY
NEW YORK CITY

"Men of Art"
"PORTRAITS IN OIL"

"VAN GOGH"

- by -

Ed Cleland

Directed by: *Frank Capra*
Traskley

ANNOUNCER

THE FEDERAL THEATRE IS ON THE AIR.

MUSIC -

FANFARE - THEME UNDER

ANNOUNCER

Presenting: - "PORTRAITS IN OIL", a dramatic
delineation of famous artists acclaimed by the
art world. We bring you living pictures of men and
their achievements -- their joys, their sorrows,
their loves, hates, successes and disappointments,
and that touch of genius that will keep them alive
as long as man love beauty.

MUSIC -

THEME SWELLS - FADES

ANNOUNCER

During the ensuing scenes we view Van Gogh not so
much as the great artist whom all the world knows,
but rather as a man whose world was too great for
the world in which he tried to live. The lack of
balance between the mental, physical and spiritual
make-up of Vincent Van Gogh shaped for him a life
that was, at best, horribly distorted. He faced

(14) -

despair at every turn ... grim, demoniacal spectres of his own twisted imaginings. From country to country, town to town he traveled, always seeking to escape from the man, Van Gogh, whom his own neuroasthenia mirrored ... always seeking somewhere, somehow, a means of liberation of the soul.

MUSIC -

THEME BRIEFLY UP & AGAIN UNDER

ANNOUNCER

We see Vincent Van Gogh, first, at the age of 31 ... in the village of Auvers ... where he is living in simple lodgings discovered for him by his friend and physician, Dr. Gachet. It is an evening in late July ... and Van Gogh paces the floor of his room, thinking ...

MUSIC -

THEME SHOULD BE OUT AT THIS POINT

ANNOUNCER -

Thinking...

(FADING)... thinking.....

(PAUSE)

SOUND -

MAN PACING UP & DOWN... SLOWLY... OVER WOODEN BOARDS

VAN GOGH - (FADE IN)

...and what's the use of it all ?

(PAUSE)

Life should be a lovely garden... filled with love... and the fragrance and perfume of fragile flowers... colored petals of such brilliance that the human eye could never comprehend.

(PAUSE)

It could be, too... if God were in our hearts and minds --- instead of in our mouths.

VAN GOGH - (Cont'd) - (PAUSE)

Faugh ! I am so sick of it all ! Eyes that should be filled with love... and hope... and human understanding --- eyes that should reflect the soul --- stare bleakly out at everything and nothing... like the ghastly windows of a crumbling house, untenanted for years and years ! So what's the use of it all ?
(PAUSE) Eyes... eyes... a woman's eyes could once have meant so much... perhaps my future sanity... who knows ? Who cares ? And still... I see those eyes... as if it all had happened yesterday... perhaps it was just yesterday... when I was young...

(BEGIN FADING)

In London... hopeful... happy ~

(FADE OUT)

(PAUSE)

MRS. LOYER - (FADE IN)

Yes, Mr. Van Gogh... you'll find my daughter out there in the garden. She is having trouble with those roses again. They simply will not

(BEGIN FADING)

climb the trellis like they're meant to do.

VAN GOGH - (CALLING BACK TO HER)

Thank you, Mrs. Loyer... I'll see if I can find her...

SOUND - DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING

SOUND - ONE MAN'S FOOTSTEPS ON GRAVEL (5 SECONDS... CUT ABRUPTLY)

VAN GOGH - Good evening !

Van Gogh - Good Evening!

- 4 -

- MISS LOYER - Oh ! You startled me ! I was working with this rose...
- VAN GOGH - I see... it won't climb up the trellis as it should. Too bad !
- MISS LOYER - It is too bad ! We've gone to so much trouble ~~and~~ such expense to make the garden beautiful. And here -- the loveliest rose of all -- just stretches out upon the ground. ~~It goes~~ Goes everywhere but where it should. It's so exasperating !
- VAN GOGH - I'll help you tie it up. Perhaps with proper training it will raise its branches up to Heaven... instead of dragging all its beauty in the dirt.
- MISS LOYER - Anyone can tell, Mr. Van Gogh, that you're a minister's son. You're always thinking in parables.
- VAN GOGH - Not always. Now I'm thinking --- of you.
- MISS LOYER - I should feel quite insulted if you were not thinking of me. After all... you're talking to me. ^{laugh} And it's only polite that one should keep his mind upon the person to whom he is talking. (laugh)

(LAUGHS LIGHTLY)

- VAN GOGH - Please... won't you sit down here... on this bench, with me... for just a moment ?
- MISS LOYER - Of course. ^{Sigh} I'm rather tired, anyhow.
- (SIGNS)
- VAN GOGH - Wait... I'll put this handkerchief on the seat. It would never do to soil the lovely colors of your frock.

_____ to feel its lovely color & your touch.

MISS LOYER - Thank you. You know, I think you like the color of this dress, far more than you do its style... and the way I wear it.

VAN GOGH - How can you say that? You know --- you should know --- how I feel toward you.

MISS LOYER - And just how DO you feel toward me?

VAN GOGH - First --- tell me, how do you feel --- ^{about} toward me?

MISS LOYER - (LIGHTLY)

^{why} I --- I think you're one of the nicest men to whom Mother has ever rented a room. There!

VAN GOGH - Is that --- all?

MISS LOYER - Isn't that enough? After all, you haven't lived with us long, you know.

VAN GOGH - That's true. But I had hoped -- for something more. You see, I --- well --- I love you. I have loved you since that very first moment I set eyes upon you. You're --- so radiant --- so beautiful ---

MISS LOYER - Thank you... you're -- oh, how shall I say it?

^{why you} You've taken me so completely by surprise.

VAN GOGH - Then --- you didn't know?

MISS LOYER - Know? I didn't even dream that ---

VAN GOGH - But now that you DO know... can't you say... that I... that we ---

MISS LOYER - What are you trying to say? You mean ---?

VAN GOGH - I mean I want you to become my wife. Will you marry me?

(PAUSE)

VAN GOGH - (Cont'd) -

Please say "yes" ! You must say "yes" ! I cannot live without you !

MISS LOYER - But I can't marry you.... I don't love you !

VAN GOGH - You'll learn to love me ! I'll be so kind... I'll fairly worship you... I'll humor every whim... your every wish ---

MISS LOYER - (INTERRUPTING)

But I can't even think of marriage with you.

VAN GOGH - Why not ? Is it because that you, too, think I am so utterly impossible ? So ugly ?

MISS LOYER - I haven't thought of you at all -- in that respect

VAN GOGH - Then you must BEGIN to think of me. Oh, you'll learn to love me... as much as I love you. I swear you will ! You must marry me at once.

MISS LOYER - I can't. ^{Mr. Van Gogh} I can never marry you. ^{can't} I cannot even consider you. I am engaged ! I am soon to marry another man... the man I love.

VAN GOGH - The man you think you love ! You will love me far more --- not for myself, but for the love I have for you within my heart ! For my sake for our sake --- you must break your engagement with this man.

MISS LOYER - Do you realize what you ^{are} asking me to do ?

VAN GOGH - Quite well. And, some day you will thank me for asking you to do it.

MISS LOYER - For one so shy, you've suddenly become TOO bold, ^{Enough} Mr. Van Gogh. I'll not have you, or any other man, telling me whom I shall marry and whom I shall love.

VAN GOGH - (Mont'd) -

twisted fibre in my brain will snap again. and I shall lose all reason... again become a hopeless, raving, maniac... and they will come again, and take me far away... and lock me up, away from all the world.

SOUND - MAN PACING ON BOARDS AGAIN

VAN GOGH : ...away from all the world... lest by some strange freak of chance I should, within my torn and tortured mind, formulate a fiendish plan by which that world might be destroyed.

(PAUSE) Yet had they listened to me years ago -- when I, an ordained missionary of God, begged them to forsake their evil ways -- I might have saved that selfsame world !

(PAUSE) I do not understand it all. I planned for a Utopia --- But I was not the first to have that plan, and see it fail.

(PAUSE) And then Gauguin ! What ever made me think that I could live beneath the roof that sheltered such a man ? Perhaps I was unreasonable. Perhaps I was ? Of course I was ! But how could it be otherwise ? Gauguin and I -- are made of different clay !

(FADE OUT - PACING VERY GRADUALLY)

(PAUSE)

VAN GOGH - (Coming up)

Gauguin!

GAUGUIN - Yes, Vincent?

VAN GOGH - What is today?

GAUGUIN - It is the 23rd of April.

VAN GOGH - The year?

GAUGUIN - 1888.

VAN GOGH - And where are we?

GAUGUIN - In Arles, of course. I am here, at your own invitation... though why I left my associates at Pont Aven I shall never understand...to humor this crack-brained idea of an "artists" community" you've always championed!

VAN GOGH - Spare me your personal opinions, please. I see that you know the day, the year, and even the place in which we live. Such simple facts are within even your own limited powers of comprehension. But tell me, why is it that you eternally cast aspersions upon my favorite artist... the famous Daudet... Daubigny, Ziem and the great Rousseau?

GAUGUIN - I cannot stand them. Their works are abhorrent to me!

VAN GOGH - And yet you worship at the shrine of Ingres, Raphael and Degas! FAUGH! How I detest them all!

GAUGUIN - But remember, Brigadier... "every man to his own opinion"!

VAN GOGH - I am SICK of your opinions. It is all I hear - day in and day out! YOUR opinions. YOUR praise of a daub of paint that a child might make! YOUR sneering upon genius!

GAUGUIN - By "genius" I suppose you mean yourself, as well?

VAN GOGH - Why not?

GAUGUIN - As you say, My Brigadier!

VAN GOGH - Stop calling me "Brigadier" --- as though I were a child, playing with toy soldiers!

GAUGUIN - As you will, mon ami. A thousand pardons.

VAN GOGH - A thousand MILLION pardons would not exonerate such crass stupidity!

GAUGUIN - Has it come to this? Have I, by coming here, surrendered all my claims to self-respect?

VAN GOGH (Laughs bitterly)

Self-respect... in YOU!

(Laughs hysterically)

GAUGUIN I think I've just as much as you -- if not a great deal more!

VAN GOGH - (Continues to laugh, then stops abruptly)

GAUGUIN - At least I respect myself too much to make love to a woman like that door-portress of th-

VAN GOGH - (Cuts in)

STOP! It is in the women who are lowest that we find real TRUTH - real UNDERSTANDING!

GAUGUIN - That is because you are so repulsive to the better women of the world that you cannot come near enough to know them!

VAN GOGH - ENOUGH! I have long awaited an opportunity such as this, my good, kind friend! You think your words have cut into my heart. You think you have wounded me...

VAN GOGH - (Continued)

when, in reality, you have succeeded only in opening up an old, old scar! I will SHOW you what it is to be wounded!

(Laughs)

GAUGUIN - (Alarmed)

Van Gogh! You are MAD! PUT DOWN THAT RAZOR!

VAN GOGH - You wished to CUT me, eh?

(Laughs hysterically)

I shall cut the very heart from out your body! And while it is still warm, I'll wrap it up.....and send it to some gutter wench who'll spit on it and turn away in scorn!

(Laughs, suddenly stops.)

GAUGUIN - (Firmly)

Vincent! Give me that razor!

VAN GOGH - (Frightened)

No! I won't!

(Fading) I won't!

GAUGUIN - Come back here! and give me that razor!

VAN GOGH - (Fading)

You can't take it from me! -----I - I -

GAUGUIN - (Calling)

COME BACK HERE.

SOUND - OF DOOR SLAMMING. MUSICAL BRIDGE. KNOCKING ON DOOR.

(PAUSE)

SOUND - OF DOOR OPENING.

3 GIRL - (Harlot type)

What is it? What you want of us?

MESSENGER Package for you, Mam'selle!

1ST GIRL - ~~Thummmmm~~....a gift...perha ps some lover....

MESSENGER - Sign this, please....

1ST GIRL - Wait! First I must open the envelope ----

SOUND - OF RIPPING OPEN ENVELOPE

1ST GIRL - Now I shall see what ---

(Screams in horror)

MESSENGER What is it? What is the Matter, Mam'selle.

2ND GIRL (Coming up)

What goes on here? You - I

~~What?~~ No wonder she fainted dead away. ~~the~~
envelope ----

~~What?~~ What is in the envelope?

MESSENGER - Am you, Mam'selle

2ND GIRL - An EAR? A HUMAN ear?

MESSENGER - Yes...that artist fellow...~~he~~
must have cut off his own ear and sent it over.
I wondered why he held a towel against his ~~face~~
he was telling me where to bring this envelope.

2ND GIRL VAN GOGH? The man is MAD! We must call ~~the~~
~~police~~
he belongs

SOUND - MUSICAL BRIDGE. ~~THE END OF THE ACT~~

PACIN - ~~THE END OF THE ACT~~

JOHN again. Behind the door. "Where I belong".

(Laughs quietly, bitterly)

A prison. That's what they call it. And they let
me walk into the prison where gaunt cypresses stretch
their long, despairing arms so hopelessly to God, just
as we in solitary gloom implored the Savior of man
kind to intercede in our behalf.

(PAUSE - during which only pacing is heard)

OK. This. This was a wonderful brother you have
always been. You and you alone have not deserted
me no matter what I've done. I remember how you came
and took me away from those bleak walls - from the
cypresses that seemed to scream aloud to God - and
then we talked in that little room -- just you and
I.

(Begin reading)

Just you and I.

(Pause)

THEO Vincent, are you happier here...away from the rigid
discipline of the - the -

VAN COORN Vanhousen? Yes. Of course I am. I - I was never
really sad, you know. Tell me, Vincent, do you think
that I was really

THEO No; you know I don't think that.

VAN COORN And yet they looked upon my paintings - the ones I
did while I was there - as the fruits of a distant
muse. Still, I think...no; I am sure that
and I see, those pictures that

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THEO -

By keeping the faith...by trying, over and over again...by going on and on and on, in spite of all adversity.

VAN GOGH -

You are very kind. But that is all intangible. I have done nothing to repay the money you have spent on me.

THEO -

Have you forgotten the sketches you have given me? Any one of them is worth far more than the little money that I have sent you.

VAN GOGH -

I should have known that you'd say that. Good Theo! You PRACTICE Christianity successfully, whereas I was preached full soon at PRINCIPLE !!!

THEO -

But you are a great artist... do not forget that.

VAN GOGH -

Am I? I sometimes think I have caught the spark... but then, again, I wonder if I'm not all wrong. Perhaps, my painting - like cutting off my ear, that time - is just a manifestation of what the doctors will call "madness."

THEO -

You were always prone to belittle yourself, Vincent...

VAN GOGH -

Why not? There is certainly no virtue in self-worship! We have enough of that - on every side!

THEO -

Quite true. But you should learn to accord yourself at least a certain amount of well-deserved respect.

VAN GOGH -

Why should I give myself something no one else has ever given me?

THEO -

No one?



WAL: GOSH -

Well...YOU have. But no one else.

NO one?

WAL: YES -

Oh, let's not argue. I know that my dependence - my behavior - is all against me. I know - only too well - that's to what the rest of our family has always said, how wrong I am in all my actions.

THEO:

Forget the family. Leave them out of it

WAL: YES -

and gladly! They've always failed me - when I needed understanding most.

They have tried to understand.

Perhaps? But how miserably they failed! They love you, devotedly and sincerely, because you make a good income - are happily married and have settled down.

But it is YOU whom they should really respect - for you have the CREATIVE ability. I only wish that I could have some talent half as great as yours! Don't despair, Theo. Because you have no talent for creative work. Without your help, I could not do the sort of thing I am doing now. We are, as it were, a partnership in creative arts. So, smoke your pipe in peace - and do not torment yourself - because we can accomplish together, and with less suffering, a work that neither of us could possibly achieve alone. If I am ever called great, then half of that greatness is yours.

WAL: YES -

Don't despair, Theo. Because you have no talent for creative work. Without your help, I could not do the sort of thing I am doing now. We are, as it were, a partnership in creative arts. So, smoke your pipe in peace - and do not torment yourself - because we can accomplish together, and with less suffering, a work that neither of us could possibly achieve alone. If I am ever called great, then half of that greatness is yours.

THEO -

JUDGE (fade out) (FADING TO BLACK) (3 STALL)

1. MOTHER (sings to)

Ood Thoo. I should write him a letter! O letter?  
I've already written him - so many letters... I don't  
know how many, in the last few weeks. I don't  
remember, even, what I wrote. Lately, everything  
has been confused. I must paint - and paint - and  
paint until I can no longer feel the sun, see the  
lark's eye or hold a peach - paint until I have daubed  
the whole of life and death and life Eternity upon a  
scraps of canvas. And then when it is dried, I'll  
arg up with it. In death, if not in life perhaps  
there is eternal peace and rest - as I have always  
told myself and felt within my soul. Or, maybe  
only madmen think that. McLeeny MADMEN? Who  
is mad - and who is sane? I wonder.

MUSIC. 1. 2nd SISTER SEVERAL (1. 2nd)

1st CHILD - There he comes! There he comes!

2nd CHILD - Who?

1st CHILD - That man. The fellow with one ear who goes out  
under the trees and paints all day.

2nd CHILD - What does he paint? Bats and bones?

1st CHILD - Now! He paints pictures!

2nd CHILD - Pictures of what?

1st CHILD - Oh, flowers, and trees and apples, and things like that.

2nd CHILD - Why?

1st CHILD - I don't know.

(Confidingly) But do you want me to tell you something?











on all

—

—————

— (house)

— This layer — <sup>Top 23</sup> — Core! (low time)

*from talent boy as quick as yours*  
- 25 -  
(how whiff)

MISS LOYER - ROSE!  
GAUGUIN - REPULSIVE!  
1ST CHILD - LUNATIC!  
1ST WOMAN - WOMAN!  
PEASANT - REST!  
THEBO - TALENT!  
SOUND - OF GUNSHOT

(Pause)

*Voices*

OF SEVERAL PEOPLE WALKING UP GRAVEL PATH.  
1ST VOICE - What is it?  
2ND VOICE - Didn't you hear that shot?  
3RD VOICE - Yes! What has happened?  
4TH VOICE - Maybe it's some poacher - shooting game!  
1ST VOICE - If it is, he's a bold one -- shooting here, in  
broad daylight!  
2ND VOICE - Look --- here comes someone!  
3RD VOICE - It's that artist fellow, Van Gogh!  
4TH VOICE - He's carrying a pistol....  
1ST VOICE - Stop here....we'll soon see what it's all about!  
SOUND - FADE OUT SOUND OF TALK HEARD ON GRAVEL.....FADE IN  
SOUND OF ONE MAN ON GRAVEL PATH.  
2ND VOICE - (Calling out)  
Monsieur Van Gogh!  
VAN GOGH - (Coming up)  
Yes?  
SOUND - CUT ALL SOUND.

2ND VOICE - Was it you who fired that shot?

VAN GOGH - Yes...I - fired the shot.

3RD VOICE - What were you shooting at?

VAN GOGH - Myself...I have killed myself.

SOUND - MURMUR OF VOICES.

4TH VOICE - (Mockingly)

Begging your pardon, Monsieur...but you have not done  
a very good job of it. You are still ALIVE!

SOUND - LAUGHTER OF MEN IN GROUP...IN, UP FULL AND FADE.  
MUSICAL BRIDGE.

THEO - (Coming up) How is he, Dr. Gachet?

GACHET - THEO! Thank Heaven you are here! I tried to get  
Vincent to tell me your address, but he refused. In  
desperation I tried to get you through your place  
of business, and....

THEO - (Cutting in) Will he live?

GACHET - I do not know what to say. When I saw the wound in  
his chest, I could not believe that he'd live more  
than a few hours. But his resistance is amazing.  
Although he lapses into occasional fits of delirium,  
he seems to be on the mend.

THEO - Thank Heaven! But why - oh why did he DO it?

GACHET - You know him, do you not?

THEO - Better than anyone else on earth knows him!

GACHET - Then you already know the answer to the question you have asked.

THEO - May I see him...now...right away?

GACHET - Of course...It may be just the thing he needs. Come--- follow me.....

THEO - Is he suffering a great deal?

GACHET - At times yes. But when his suffering is at its worst, he lapses into delirium...and is not conscious of the pain.

THEO - That's a blessing, at any rate. How is he - otherwise?

GACHET - Mentally, you mean?

THEO - Of course.

GACHET - Quite well, it seems. He smokes his pipe, and all in all seems very tranquil. Here's his door....he quiet...I'd not like to awaken him, if he's asleep....

SOUND - CREAKING OF HINGES AS DOOR OPENS.

VAN GOGH - (Off mike, calling out)  
Who's there?

GACHET - It is I...Gachet...and here's your brother Theo who has come to see you!

THEO - Vincent! Oh, Vincent...it's good to see you lying there so peacefully.....smoking away on your pipe... and letting the rest of the world go hang. How do you feel?

VAN GOGH - As well as anyone - who's done what I have done - could hope to feel.

THEO - Thank heaven it was no worse! Lie there and rest, old man...and soon you will be out again, with brush, easel and canvas...all ready to begin your life anew.

VAN GOGH - It's strange....Theo...I wanted to die. Yet, in trying to die I made as great a farce of death as I always have of life.

GACHET - Easy, Vincent....Remember what I said...

VAN GOGH - Oh, I shall not excite myself. Don't worry. At present I am enjoying a quiet, tranquil sort of peace that I have never known before. I don't know why... but that is how it is.

THEO - Good. Peace and quiet are things you've always sought and never found. It's like the....

VAN GOGH - GROANS

THEO - Vincent! Vincent! What is it?

GACHET - (Aside to Theo)  
Shhh...the pain...try not to upset him....

VAN GOGH - GROANS...BUT MORE WEAKLY THIS TIME.

THEO - Never mind, Vincent...you'll be all right.....

VAN GOGH - (Weakly)....Loveliest rose...will raise its branches heaven-ward...instead of dragging all its beauty - in the dirt.

SOUND - CATCHES BREATH AS THOUGH IN GREAT PAIN...EXHALES SLOWLY...THEN BEGINS TO BREATHE REGULARLY AND HEAVILY... AS ONE DEEP IN SLEEP.

GAGNET - Good....he's breathing regularly again. Pretty soon, he'll be asleep...completely out of pain.

VAN GOGH - Rose....repulsive...lunatic...no decent woman...  
(Sighs deeply).....rest!

MUSIC - MUSICAL BRIDGE

ANNOUNCER - Rest....eternal rest...came to Vincent Van Gogh on the morning of July 29th, 1890. His brother Theo buried him two days later in the cemetery of Auvers.... then, six months later, Theo Van Gogh, joined in death the brother whom he had protected, defended and - most important of all, understood - throughout his life!

MUSIC - THEME -- DOWN AND UNDER.

ANNOUNCER - You have just heard the 34th in a new series of programs entitled "PORTRAITS IN OIL". Tonight's program - "VAN GOGH" - was written by Ed Cleland and directed by ~~Frank Carran~~ *Ira Ashley*.  
"PORTRAITS IN OIL" will come to you over this Station every week at the same time as a presentation of the Federal Radio Theatre, a project of the Works Progress Administration.